



INDIANA JOINT ASTHMA COALITION

RESOLUTION 2007-1 SUPPORTING THE ELIMINATION OF OPEN BURNING OF YARD WASTE AT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Approved June 28, 2007

Whereas, asthma is a significant public health concern in Indiana as follows:

- In 2005, an estimated 8.2% of Indiana adults currently have asthma;¹
- In 2005, an estimated 9.5% of Indiana children currently have asthma;²

Whereas, asthma is a significant economic burden to our state and nation as follows:

- The direct medical lifetime costs for a person with asthma are estimated to range from \$50,000 to \$220,000;³
- In 2004, asthma was estimated to burden our nation with 16.1 billion dollars in direct and indirect costs,⁴

Whereas, the State of Indiana has adopted and is implementing a comprehensive plan to reduce the burden of asthma among Hoosiers;⁵

Whereas, the open burning⁶ of yard waste⁷ creates smoke containing a complex mixture of fine particles, carbon monoxide, and other toxic substances with known adverse health effects;⁸ and,

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data*, Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2005 Indiana Data), Accessed May 23, 2006 <<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss>>

²Indiana State Department of Health, *Indiana Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)*, 2005.

³Indiana State Department of Health, *The Burden of Asthma in Indiana*, "Cost of Asthma," pg 13 as cited in *U.S. EPA Cost of Illness Handbook*, Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition, updated December 2004, Accessed May 23, 2006 <<http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/asthma>>

⁴American Lung Association, *Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality 2006 (July 2006)*, American Lung Association, Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Research and Program Services, Accessed August 31, 2006 <<http://www.lungusa.org/atf/cf/{7A8D42C2-FCCA-4604-8ADE-7F5D5E762256}/ASTHMA06FINAL.PDF>>

⁵Indiana State Department of Health, *A Strategic Plan for Addressing Asthma in Indiana*, Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition, the Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, December 2004, Accessed May 23, 2006 <<http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/asthma/pdfs/IndianaAsthmaPlan.pdf>>

⁶Open burning is the burning of any material so that air contaminants from the combustion process are emitted directly into the air, without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber (325 IAC 4-1-0.5(6)).

⁷Yard waste is unwanted vegetation materials such as grass clippings, fallen leaves, dead vegetation, and fallen tree branches.

⁸U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Technology Transfer Network, Air Toxics Website, Residential Leaf Burning, Accessed June 15, 2007 <<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/burn/leafburn2.html>>

Whereas, the short-term exposure (hours or days) to fine particles in smoke may include irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat; aggravation of lung disease, including causing asthma attacks and acute bronchitis; aggravation of heart disease, including heart attacks and arrhythmias;⁹ and,

Whereas, the long-term exposure (years) to fine particles in smoke may include reduced lung function, the development of chronic bronchitis, and even premature death;¹⁰ and,

Whereas children, older adults and those with heart or lung disease, including asthma, are more sensitive to the effects of fine particles, and older adults and those with heart or lung disease are more likely to experience health effects earlier and at lower levels than younger or healthy people,¹¹ and

Whereas, state rule allows private residential burning, where the building contains four or fewer dwelling units, of clean wood products¹² and paper, (hereafter collectively referred to as yard waste), in a noncombustible container with enclosed sides and a bottom that is sufficiently vented to induce adequate primary combustion (326 IAC 4-1-3(c)(2)).

Whereas, due to a lack of chimney or exhaust stack, open burning of yard waste does not provide for adequate smoke dispersion,¹³ and therefore results in a higher concentration of smoke, containing fine particles and other toxic substances, at ground level that can remain for a long period of time, and

Whereas, ground level smoke from the open burning of yard waste from residential properties also diminishes the use and enjoyment of neighboring property and quality of life, and

Whereas, open burning of yard waste from residential properties is not adequately regulated in the State of Indiana; and,

Whereas, when bans or restrictions on open burning of yard waste exist, such bans may not be adequately enforced, and

Whereas, other methods of managing yard waste such as chipping, grinding, composting, land application or disposal in an appropriately regulated sanitary landfill or incinerator are generally available, and

⁹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Health Effects of Wood Smoke, Accessed June 15, 2007
<<http://www.epa.gov/woodstoves/healtheffects.html>>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Clean wood products are wood products, including vegetation, that are not coated with stain, paint, glue, or other coating material. (325 IAC 4-1-0.5(3))

¹³ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Control Technology Center, Evaluation of Emissions from the Open Burning of Land-Clearing Debris, EPA-600/R-96-128, October 1996, Accessed June 15, 2007
<<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/burn/brushburn2.pdf>>

Whereas, there is still a need in some areas of the state for resources to provide alternative methods of managing yard waste, and

Whereas, the general public has come to understand that disposal of waste products in waterways is not an acceptable method of disposal, but many do not make the connection that open burning is essentially disposal of waste products in the air resources of the state which all must share and are essential to human health, and

Whereas, chipping, grinding, composting and land application can be beneficial to soil quality and the environment,^{14,15} and

Whereas, city and county governments are the most effective and efficient at addressing open burning in their jurisdictions,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition:

Declares open burning of yard waste and clean wood products is not an appropriate method of managing these materials.

Supports increased education and outreach efforts to inform the general public and policy makers about the health hazards and economic impacts of open burning.

Encourages city and county government officials to adopt and enforce bans on the open burning of wood products and yard waste from residential properties, including those in unincorporated areas.

Supports continued and additional funding and efforts of state and local governments, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Solid Waste Management Districts, County Cooperatives and Agricultural organizations to provide and promote alternative, environmentally beneficial methods to manage wood products and yard waste, especially in areas where such alternatives are not readily available.

¹⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Composting, Backyard or Onsite Composting, Accessed June 15, 2007 <<http://www.epa.gov/composting/backyard.htm>>

¹⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wastes, GreenScapes: Environmentally Beneficial Landscaping, Accessed June 15, 2007 <<http://www.epa.gov/GreenScapes/pubs/brochure.htm>>